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| 10/806,322 | 03/22/2004 | Tom Testa | TES-0003 | 1746 |

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| EXAMINER |
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ARK, DARREN W

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| ART UNIT | PAPER NUMBER |
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3643

DATE MAILED: 09/21/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/806,322

Applicant(s)

TESTA, TOM

Examiner

Darren W. Ark

Art Unit

3643

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 24 August 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-10, 16, 21 and 26-31 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 21, 30 and 31 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-10, 16 and 26-29 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 22 March 2004 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Claims 21, 30, 31 are withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b) as being drawn to a nonelected Species, there being no allowable generic or linking claim. Election was made **without** traverse in the reply filed on 6/14/2005.

Drawings

2. The drawings are objected to because the reference numbers in Figs. 1-4 are not clearly shown. Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the

examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

3. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

4. Claims 1-10, 16, 26-29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

In regard to claim 1, line 5, the phrase “a portion of a said butt portion” renders the claim vague and indefinite. The term “a” should be deleted.

In regard to claim 1, line 6, the phrase “movement along at said longitudinal axis by a securing member” renders the claim vague and indefinite. The term “at” should be deleted.

In regard to claim 26, the phrase “said accessory ring is installed on a reel seat portion” renders the claim vague and indefinite since the accessory ring has not been positively recited as being engaged to the rod.

In regard to claim 27, the phrase “said securing member abuts said accessory ring against a reel seat hood” renders the claim vague and indefinite since the accessory ring has not been positively recited as being engaged to the rod. Also see claim 28 for a similar problem.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

5. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

6. Claims 1-10, 16, 26-29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Lirette 4,587,757.

Lirette discloses a fishing rod shaft portion (11) including a butt portion (inside 32) and a reel seat portion (portion receiving reel in Fig. 2); a rigid (12 can be made of metal) fishing accessory ring with a first aperture (32) configured to selectively engage a portion of the butt portion (see Fig. 2) such that the accessory ring is prevented from movement along the long axis of the rod by a securing member (36); a second aperture (one of 16) rigid enough to engage a safety line or a harness line (16 are made of flexible material, but no particular threshold or value of rigidity is being recited, furthermore any line is capable of engaging 16 via its aperture); a third aperture (other of 16 or 52); wherein the first, second, and third materials form a contiguous ("contiguous" defined as "1. Sharing a boundary or edge: TOUCHING.") article; and a rod shaft (of 11), a butt portion (of 11), and reel seat portion (of 11).

Lirette also discloses a first material surrounding the shaft (32) and a second material defining an aperture (16).

In regard to claim 26, Lirette discloses the accessory ring (32) installed on or capable of being installed on a reel seat portion (rearward portion of the rod including the butt and where reel is mounted; no particular structure being recited).

In regard to claims 27 and 28, Lirette discloses the securing member (36) capable of abutting the accessory ring (32) against a reel seat hood or reel tab (positioning of 36 is such that 32 is capable of abutting against the claimed structures; no particular configuration is being positively, structurally recited).

In regard to claim 29, Lirette discloses the securing member comprising a threaded member (36 is a threaded bolt).

7. Claims 1-10, 16, 26-29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Ferguson 1,719,695.

Ferguson discloses a rod (see Fig. 1) with a shaft portion (10; rod not particularly claimed), a butt portion (lower end of 10 where 15 is engaged), and a reel seat portion (at 18 where 22 are engaged); a first aperture (at 17) capable of engaging a portion of the rod butt or reel seat portion (10 has such structure) such that the ring is prevented from movement along the long axis of the rod by a securing member (13, 17) which is a threaded member (ends of 13 engage 14); a second aperture (at one of 16); a third aperture (other of 16); wherein the first, second, and third materials form a contiguous (see Fig. 2) article.

Ferguson also discloses a first material surrounding the shaft (at 17), a second material defining an aperture (at 16).

In regard to claims 26-28, Ferguson disclose the accessory ring (16, 17) capable of being installed on a reel seat portion and capable of abutting the ring against a reel seat hood or a reel tab (no particular distinguishing structure being recited).

8. Claims 1-9, 16, 26-28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Byington 309,028.

Byington discloses a first aperture (B) configured to engage a portion of the rod butt or reel seat portion (E is the rod) and a securing member (end cap shown on the lower end of the rod which is not labeled); a second aperture (one of A); a third aperture (other of A); wherein the first, second, and third materials form a contiguous ("contiguous" defined as "1. Sharing a boundary or edge: TOUCHING.") article.

Byington discloses a rod (see Fig. 1) with a shaft portion (E).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

9. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

10. Claim 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Byington 309,028 in view of Hopkins 3,839,811.

Byington does not disclose the second and third apertures being substantially circular in cross section. Hopkins discloses an aperture (18, 22) for retaining a hook (H) which is substantially circular in cross section (see Figs. 2, 6). It would have been

obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify the second and third apertures of Byington such that they are substantially circular in cross section in view of Hopkins in order to provide apertures which fully encircle the hooks retained therein so as to assuredly prevent the hooks from easily disengaging.

11. Claims 1-9, 16, 26-29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Byington 309,028 in view of Phelps 5,564,215.

Byington does not disclose the securing member being a threaded member. Phelps discloses a first aperture (defined by 10) prevented from moving along the axis of the rod adjacent a reel seat (14AA) and rod butt (14A) by a threaded securing member (12). It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the device of Byington such that it is prevented from moving along the axis of the rod by a threaded securing member in view of Phelps in order to reliably maintain the position of the accessory ring adjacent the fishing reel so that the angler is provided with a convenient location to secure the hook.

12. Claim 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Byington 309,028 in view of Phelps 5,564,215 as applied to claim 2 above, and further in view of Hopkins 3,839,811.

Byington and Phelps do not disclose the second and third apertures being substantially circular in cross section. Hopkins discloses an aperture (18, 22) for retaining a hook (H) which is substantially circular in cross section (see Figs. 2, 6). It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify the second and third apertures of Byington and Phelps such that they are substantially circular in

cross section in view of Hopkins in order to provide apertures which fully encircle the hooks retained therein so as to assuredly prevent the hooks from easily disengaging.

13. Claims 1-10, 16, 26-29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sokolik 2,556,403 in view of Phelps 5,564,215.

Sokolik discloses an elastic fishing accessory ring comprising a first aperture (defined by 14b in Fig. 3); a second aperture (one of 23b); a third aperture (other of 23b); wherein the first, second, and third materials form a contiguous ("contiguous" defined as "1. Sharing a boundary or edge: TOUCHING.") article; and a rod (21) with a shaft portion (see Fig. 2), butt portion (end of rod that is gripped) and reel seat portion (generally where reel can be mounted); a first material surrounding the shaft (at 14b), a second material defining an aperture (23b), but does not disclose the accessory ring being rigid. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to make the accessory ring rigid, since it has been held to be within the general skill of a worker in the art to select a known material on the basis of its suitability for the intended use as a matter of obvious design choice, and because a rigid material would more assuredly prevent the penetration of a large hook from extending therethrough versus an elastic material and cause possible and dangerous exposure of the hook point. *In re Leshin*, 125 USPQ 416. Sokolik also does not disclose the securing member being a threaded member. Phelps discloses a first aperture (defined by 10) prevented from moving along the axis of the rod adjacent a reel seat (14AA) and rod butt (14A) by a threaded securing member (12). It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify

the device of Sokolik such that it is prevented from moving along the axis of the rod by a threaded securing member in view of Phelps in order to reliably maintain the position of the accessory ring adjacent the fishing reel so that the angler is provided with a convenient location to secure the hook.

14. Claims 1-9, 16, 17, 21, 26-29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese Pat. No. 11-346606 to Shoji et al. in view of Phelps 5,564,215.

Shoji et al. discloses an fishing accessory ring with a first aperture (1, 1a made or rubber); a second aperture (left occurrence of 2, 2a-c in Fig. 6); a third aperture (right occurrence of 2, 2a-c in Fig. 6); wherein the first, second, and third materials form a contiguous ("contiguous" defined as "1. Sharing a boundary or edge: TOUCHING.") article. but does not disclose the accessory ring being rigid. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to make the accessory ring rigid, since it has been held to be within the general skill of a worker in the art to select a known material on the basis of its suitability for the intended use as a matter of obvious design choice, and because a rigid material would be more sturdy and difficult to break over an elastic material. *In re Leshin*, 125 USPQ 416.

Shoji et al. discloses a rod (see Fig. 1) with a shaft portion (7).

Shoji et al. also does not disclose the securing member being a threaded member. Phelps discloses a first aperture (defined by 10) prevented from moving along the axis of the rod adjacent a reel seat (14AA) and rod butt (14A) by a threaded securing member (12). It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the

art at the time of the invention to modify the device of Shoji et al. such that it is prevented from moving along the axis of the rod by a threaded securing member in view of Phelps in order to reliably maintain the position of the accessory ring adjacent the fishing reel so that the angler is provided with a convenient location to secure the hook.

15. Claim 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Byington 309,028 in view of Phelps 5,564,215 as applied to claim 2 above, and further in view of Hopkins 3,839,811.

Shoji et al. and Phelps do not disclose the second and third apertures being substantially circular in cross section. Hopkins discloses an aperture (18, 22) for retaining a hook (H) which is substantially circular in cross section (see Figs. 2, 6). It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify the second and third apertures of Shoji et al. and Phelps such that they are substantially circular in cross section in view of Hopkins in order to provide apertures which fully encircle the hooks retained therein so as to assuredly prevent the hooks from easily disengaging.

Conclusion

16. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Ito 2003/0145509 discloses a fishing rod and accessory ring combination comprising a fishing rod shaft portion (1, 10) including a butt portion (2) and a reel seat portion (4); a rigid ring (metal ring 21) including a first aperture (21b) for engaging a portion of the reel seat portion; and a second aperture (26) adapted to engage an article of fishing tackle or hook (27, 28). Tsengas 5,160,257 discloses an

accessory ring (150, 160) that engages a reel seat (24) and a reel tab (foot of reel).

Clark, Jr. et al. 3,095,042 discloses a first ring (12), second ring (13), and a third ring (14).

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Darren W. Ark whose telephone number is (571) 272-6885. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F, 8:30am-5:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Peter M. Poon can be reached on (571) 272-6891. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Darren W. Ark
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DWA